

Subject: Deadline change for GE Labeling petitions

Date: Fri, 13 Nov 1998 09:50:01 -0600

From: Margaret Wittenberg <margaret.wittenberg@wholefoods.com>

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Good news! Due to the overwhelming surge of interest of consumers and the media about the concerns of unlabeled genetically engineered foods, Mothers for Natural Law has changed their deadline for the signing of the "label genetically engineered foods" petitions to DECEMBER 31st.

The increased time will enable those who are just learning about genetic engineering of our food supply to be able to add their names to the growing list that will be sent to President Clinton, Congress, and the FDA.

The Mothers for Natural Law group asks that each store send them completed petitions weekly rather than waiting until December 31st. Weekly submissions will greatly help their counting process.

The surge in consumer and media interest is largely due to the NY Times magazine article I mentioned in my previous email. The article broke the apparent media block on reporting anything negative about the genetic engineering of our food supply. It was the impetus for ABC World News Tonight to run a segment entitled "Fooling with Mother Nature" on their November 9th broadcast. They also ran an opinion piece that night entitled "You Say Tomato, I Say IGF-1". Both segments raised concerns about genetic engineering of food and, particularly about the fact that without a genetic engineering labeling law, consumers don't have the opportunity to tell by the label if they are buying something that has ingredients from genetically engineered crops or not.

So, if you haven't already, display the "One Million in '98" petitions in your store right now. With the extended deadline of December 31st, the number we should be able to collect should be extraordinary.

Resources for Team Members: And, if you need to catch up on background info about genetic engineering, make sure you read the our own WFM pamphlet: "Genetically Engineered Food: Your Right to Know". You can also find past articles from InnerViews about genetic engineering on our Team Member Network (W3@wholefoods.com) as well as on our website and in-store kiosks.

Many thanks
Margaret

Margaret Wittenberg wrote:

>
> In September we sent each store a kit to participate in the "One Million
> in '98 Campaign", a national effort spearheaded by the Mothers for
> Natural Law to promote the mandatory labeling of foods containing
> genetically engineered ingredients. Although the U.S. government knows
> that an enormous number of people in Europe are vehemently opposed to
> genetic engineering of their food supply, they don't think their own US
> citizens even care. The goal is to collect one million signatures by
> Thanksgiving to show to President Clinton, members of Congress, the US
> Dept of Agriculture, and the FDA that a significant number of US
> citizens are concerned about the possible health and environmental risks
> from genetically engineered foods. The mandatory labeling petition
> upholds the right of consumers to make informed choices.

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> check
> it out, you can find it at your local library or access it at the New
> York Times archive website at <http://archives.nytimes.com/archives/>
> They charge \$2.50 per article. Type "playing god in the garden" in the
> search box and then click.
> (Note: it is a violation of copyright laws for us to email the text to
> you.)
>
> Start Now!
> REMEMBER, we only have two weeks to complete a major petition signing
> campaign to bring attention to the fact that the whether a consumer
> wants to consume genetically engineered food needs to be a conscious
> choice for all shoppers. Required labeling of genetically engineered
> ingredients is the only way consumers can truly decide one way or
> another. And, manufacturers need to be able to continue having
> non-genetically engineered food sources from which to choose.
>
> Thank you ahead of time for all your efforts to make these next two
> weeks an overwhelming success.
>
> Margaret
>

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Margaret Wittenberg
National Communications Team Leader
Whole Foods Market

512-477-4455
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- > The kit each of you received in September included: 250 revised WFM
- > Genetic
- > Engineering pamphlets, 1 master copy of the "Petition to Secure the
- > Mandatory Labeling of all Genetically Engineered Foods", and 1 Take
- > Action display poster to draw attention to the pamphlets and petition.
- > Instructions with the master copy of the petition indicated that it
- > should be used to make multiple copies with the intent to collect as
- > many signatures from customers as possible.
- >
- > COMPLAINTS FROM CUSTOMERS
- > Unfortunately, it seems that few stores have made the effort. We have
- > received numerous complaints and anger from consumers shocked that Whole
- > Foods Market has not participated in the million signature campaign.
- > Also, a popular listserve on the Internet related to concerns about
- > genetic engineering of food has had derogatory comments about WFM
- > wondering why we haven't participated in the campaign, especially since
- > Wild Oats seemed to have been successful in informing and activating
- > their customers.
- >
- > Whole Foods Market is one of the over 100 VIP Signatories who support
- > the mandatory labeling of genetically engineered foods. Our signature
- > signifies that our company wants consumers to make informed choices.
- > But, if consumers in our stores are not being informed of the
- > controversy and the opportunity to let their voice be heard, our
- > signature means nothing.
- >
- > LET CONSUMERS KNOW
- > Please! find your kits, photocopy the petition, and let consumers know
- > it exists. If you have misplaced your kit, you can contact Kestrel
- > Printing (512-469-0409) and have them send you and bill you for a
- > replacement. (We know each store received their kit in September since a
- > signature was required at receiving.)
- >
- > WE ONLY HAVE 2 WEEKS BEFORE THE THANKSGIVING DEADLINE TO JOIN WITH OTHER
- > RETAILERS AND CONSUMERS ACROSS THE COUNTRY WITH THE ONE MILLION
- > SIGNATURE CAMPAIGN.
- >
- > Let your customers know they can print the petition from both our WFM
- > website and in-store kiosks so they can collect signatures, too. Over
- > the last several months the One Million in '98 petition has also been on
- > the Take Action area in our own WFM website and on our in-store kiosks
- > to inform and encourage people to participate in the campaign.
- >
- > NEW YORK TIMES MAGAZINE ARTICLE MAKES WAVES
- > Don't understand the big deal? Read NY Times Magazines' October 25, 1998
- > article entitled "Playing God in the Garden" by Michael Pollan. As an
- > intro to the article, the cover of the magazine included this:
- > "Genetically engineered potatoes and other crops already cover 45
- > million acres of American farmland. Biotechnology is agriculture's most
- > carefully cultivated secret--and maybe the root of the next farm
- > crisis." The author is especially gifted in his approach as he explains
- > his quest as a gardener and a consumer to decide whether he felt
- > comfortable planting and eating genetically altered foods. His
- > interviews with farmers is especially enlightening.
- > The article came out the same week I was in Washington, DC for a
- > National Organic Standards Board meeting. It was making big waves
- > throughout Washington, including getting the attention of the Secretary
- > of Agriculture. To